

TO COMMEMORATE THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUNTSVILLE ITEM

**HON. JIM TURNER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I have a special opportunity today to honor the Huntsville Item, a fine newspaper in East Texas, which will be celebrating its 150th birthday on August 18.

The Huntsville Item is the second oldest continually published newspaper in the state of Texas. Over the last century and a half, it has reported the everyday challenges facing East Texans, as well as the triumphs and tragedies of our great nation.

The Huntsville Item began publication in Huntsville, Texas on August 20 1850, under the editorship of George Robinson, who was born in Liverpool, England. From 1863–1864, during Robinson's enlistment in the Civil War, the Item was irregularly published due to Robinson's war duties and scarce supplies.

A fire destroyed the printing house of the Item on May 4, 1878, and the paper had to be printed several blocks away. But again, six years later, fire struck down the printing house, interrupting the Item's distribution for several weeks while printing was relocated to nearby Willis. Later that year, George's youngest son, Fred, took over management of the paper, moving all its operations back into Huntsville.

For several years early in the twentieth century, the Huntsville Item operated as the Huntsville Post-Item under publisher J.A. Palmer. In 1915, the paper was sold to Ross Woodall, who, along with his wife, published the paper until 1967.

The Item is currently owned by Community Holdings Newspapers, Inc.

The faded headlines of this newspaper tell the story of our nation's history.

Through the Civil War, two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Kosovo, the Item relayed news of brave American soldiers to their parents, siblings, and loved ones. Its newsprint has captured the Great Depression, the Baby Boom, the Oil Rush, the S&L crash, and the digital revolution. Its columns have examined Nolan Ryan, Willie Nelson, LBJ and Sam Rayburn.

I congratulate all the editors, photographers, and reporters who have made this newspaper last through the test of time. Even after four fires and other challenges, the paper has survived and flourished.

I hope that the stories it reports in the next hundred and fifty years will mirror the same growth, progress, and success that our nation has experienced since its first copy, published in 1850.

TRIBUTE TO POSTMASTER ROY C. BUNCH

**HON. WALTER B. JONES**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I pay a special tribute to Postmaster Roy C. Bunch who resides in North Carolina's

Third Congressional District, which I have the privilege to represent.

Next week friends, family, and officials will gather at the Albemarle Plantation in Hertford to recognize Mr. Bunch for 50 years of dedicated service to the federal government.

Mr. Bunch began his career in the United States Navy on August 24, 1944 and served our Nation until March 6, 1946.

His career as Postmaster of the Belvidere facility began on January 24, 1952 where he has tirelessly served for over 48 years.

After fifty years of service to the Federal Government and to the men, women and children of our great Nation, Mr. Bunch is not slowing down.

He is in wonderful health and has mentioned no plans of retirement.

He currently resides in Belvidere, North Carolina with his wife of 51 years, Clemma Bunch. Together Roy and Clemma have one son and a daughter.

He continues to be an exemplary example of an outstanding public servant and for that I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Bunch.

All of our federal employees deserve great thanks from this Nation. It is not an overstatement to say that without federal employees our country would not be able to function. They touch every aspect of our lives and provide immeasurable benefits to us all. Without the dedication to service that federal workers such as Mr. Bunch provide, our Nation would not be the great country it is today.

Mr. Roy Bunch, "thank you," I salute you.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MINGE-HOOLEY COMPREHENSIVE RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

**HON. DAVID MINGE**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, today I announce the introduction of landmark legislation to help maintain the viability of America's rural economy. I join with my colleague Representative DARLENE HOOLEY and members of the Democratic Rural Task Force in introducing the Comprehensive Rural Telecommunications Act.

Several months ago, I was given the opportunity to chair the Democratic Rural Task Force. This task force was developed with the aim of pursuing initiatives which ensure our rural communities are not left behind in the new millennium. Many factors comprise a robust economy. That is true in an urban, suburban or rural community. It was my job to decide which economic sectors of rural America we could most realistically pursue.

With the advice and input of the telecommunications innovators in my Congressional district, I saw the important need for a strong investment in telecommunications infrastructure to provide for the maintenance and future growth of rural America. The Internet creates great commercial opportunities; therefore, telecommunications infrastructures are more than ever a crucial tool of our economic development. However, rural communities are at a real disadvantage when it comes to building these new advanced networks, given their

distance from urban centers and low population densities. Telecommunication providers often prefer to deploy advanced telecommunication systems in urban areas, where fixed costs are spread over more customers and volume is greater.

The gentlewoman from Oregon and I set to work on an ambitious proposal that would take a comprehensive approach rather than several fragmented efforts. This collaborative effort led to the three part Comprehensive Rural Telecommunications Act. Our legislation combines incentives for infrastructure creation along with the educational opportunities needed to ensure a population who can utilize the new infrastructure.

The legislation establishes National Centers for Distance Working which would provide training, referral, and employment-related services and assistance to individuals in rural communities and Indian Tribes to support the use of teleworking in information and high technology fields. These centers would help people in rural areas link up with employers so they could take advantage of new career opportunities even if they do not live in areas with numerous employers.

To encourage infrastructure creation, the legislation provides a 10% to 15% tax credit on expenditures by companies deploying broadband (1.5 MBPS) or enhanced broadband (10 MBPS) in rural areas. The legislation also authorizes the USDA's Rural Utility Service to provide up to \$3 billion in loans or credit extensions to eligible telecommunications carrier providers to finance the deployment of broadband service in rural communities.

A special thanks goes to the esteemed Senators DORGAN, ROCKEFELLER, and WELLSTONE. Much of this legislation is based on individual bills they have previously introduced. I would also like to thank the Chairman of the Democratic Caucus, Representative MARTIN FROST.

Mr. Speaker, I request that my House colleagues join with me in supporting and passing the Minge-Hooley Comprehensive Rural Telecommunications Act, which is critical to rural America's future.

FREE SPEECH AND MEDIA IN THE OSCE REGION AFTER 25 YEARS

**HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, today freedom of the press and media in the OSCE participating States is deteriorating and regressing, largely unnoticed by the peoples of the region. This is happening in Western and Central Europe in much the same way one cooks a frog. Place the frog in cold water and start the fire. As the water heats up, the frog is gradually cooked—having never known he was in danger. This type of political gradualism is a true threat to the peoples and States of Europe.

Recent hearings held by the Helsinki Commission, on which I serve, have noted a number of high profile cases in Eastern Europe showcasing the situation. We have heard of the rise of influence and pressure from heavy-handed government authorities who feel the need to control the views and reports of independent journalists. Such actions have been